

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

✓ Please replace the sentence starting on page 20, line 1 with the following sentence:

FIG. 8 is a detailed block diagram of a packet of FIG. 8

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✓ Please replace the paragraphs starting on page 23, line 16 with the following paragraphs:

B  
Referring to FIG. 6, an example of a protocol-independent frame (or packet) 150 for transportation of MPLS labels is shown. The frame 150 may comprise an identification portion 152, a MPLS label portion 154, a layer 2 address portion 156, a data identifier portion 158, a layer 3 portion 160, a user payload portion 162 and a error detection portion 164. The MPLS label portion 154 may be used for switching packets at nodes and is not part of the payload. The MPLS label portion 154 may comprise one or more 32-bit words (MPLS labels). Implementing the MPLS labels 154 outside the payload may simplify node design.

The protocol independent frame 150 may be utilized by SONET/SDH and direct data-over-fiber networks. The protocol-independent frame 150 may be used with the Hybrid Data Transport previously described. The protocol-independent frame 150 may

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cancel.

create an encapsulating frame for all types of packets. The MPLS label portion ~~157~~ 154 generally precede any other information, such as the layer 2 and the layer 3 addresses 156 and 160 and the payload portion 162. The protocol-independent frame 150 may be used to implement high-speed switching logic at nodes without having to incorporate protocol-specific knowledge for each of the packets.

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✓ Please replace the paragraphs starting on page 24, line 20 with the following paragraphs:

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In one implementation, all optical networking nodes may be designed with a simple MPLS switching logic (not shown), without the requirement of protocol awareness/conversion. Optical networking nodes may include a simple de-framing hardware logic for the MPLS labels 154. Layer 2 address portion 156 may not have significance at the entry/exit points of optical networks. The layer 2 address portion 156 may be implemented behind the packet identification portion 152. The packet identification portion 152 may tell what kind of packet is embedded in the frame 150 after the MPLS labels ~~157~~ 154.

The MPLS labels ~~157~~ 154 generally follow the packet identification portion 152, therefore, regardless of underlying protocol, an optical networking node may simply read the MPLS

B3  
end .  
labels 157 154, use hardware/software logic to perform MPLS switching and forward the packet to the next network.

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✓ Please replace the paragraph starting on page 51, line 2 with the following paragraph:

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B4  
~~A packet~~ An apparatus having an interface connectable to a network. The interface may be configured to transmit information via a frame in the network. The frame may have a packet envelope carrying a plurality of packets. A first ~~The packet may comprise~~ have one or more labels configured to control routing of the first packet through the network and a payload to carry the information.

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